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U.S. ponders reprisal for taking of Daniloff

Zakharov insists FBI set him up

By Bill Gertz
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Gennady Zakharov, the accused Soviet spy whose arrest set up the seizure of Nicholas Daniloff, in an unusual public appearance yesterday said he was "set up" by the FBI as part of a deliberate attempt to undermine U.S.-Soviet relations.

Speaking to a small group of reporters amid tight security at the Soviet's U.N. mission in New York, Mr. Zakharov also denied any link between his case and the subsequent imprisonment of Mr. Daniloff.

But Mr. Zakharov's account of events leading up to his Aug. 23 arrest on a New York subway platform was remarkably similar to the language employed by Mr. Daniloff, a reporter for U.S. News & World Report to describe what happened to him just one week after Mr. Zakharov was arrested.

Comparing the two cases, Mr. Zakharov said: "I was set up. Mr. Daniloff was detained. He was officially indicted for his espionage."

Mr. Zakharov was released into the custody of Soviet officials Friday as part of trade to free Mr. Daniloff from a KGB prison where he had been held for nearly two weeks. Both men still face espionage trials and have not been permitted to return to their respective countries.

Speaking through an interpreter, Mr. Zakharov said his arrest was the result of an "atmosphere of spy mania" in the United States. He has been indicted on three counts of espionage.

"I believe that this act was meant to undermine or undercut relations between our two countries," he said.

Mr. Zakharov, a physicist employed by the United Nations secretariat who does not hold diplomatic immunity, was arrested after he allegedly paid \$1,000 for classified documents provided by an informant. The arrest was the culmination of a three-year FBI counterspy operation.

An FBI affidavit and the federal grand jury indictment of Mr. Zakharov "both met the requirements of probable cause," FBI spokesman Bill Carter said yesterday.

"The FBI will not add credibility to today's assertions

by Mr. Zakharov and has no further comment," Mr. Carter said.

Soviet authorities admitted only a handful of U.S. reporters at yesterday's 45-minute briefing, leaving dozens waiting outside the heavily guarded Manhattan compound. They allowed just three television crews inside the room to tape the briefing and refused permission to broadcast the press conference live.

U.S. media access was limited because no Soviet journalists had been invited to hear Mr. Daniloff's news conference in Moscow two days earlier, Soviet officials said.

Mr. Daniloff, 51, was arrested Aug. 30 by the KGB after accepting a package from a Moscow acquaintance. The U.S. reporter, backed by numerous U.S. officials, including President Reagan, has said he was framed by Soviet agents.

Mr. Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz have publicly described Mr. Zakharov, 39, as a "spy" and said Mr. Daniloff is being held hostage to obtain Mr. Zakharov's release.

U.S. officials ruled out an exchange of the two men, both before and after they were in fact exchanged.

Mr. Reagan has been criticized by those who say the U.S. concessions made to obtain Mr. Daniloff's pretrial release last week have undercut efforts to limit Soviet spying.

Initially, the administration offered to arrange a pretrial release of Mr. Zakharov in exchange for the unconditional release of Mr. Daniloff.

Mr. Reagan subsequently accepted an agreement in which both men would be released pending their respective trials.

The Soviet suspect said he was conducting research in the United States and did not know the docu-

ments he received from the informant, whom he identified as "John," contained U.S. defense secrets.

"As far as secret materials were concerned, I never asked for them and I never received them," Mr. Zakharov said.

He charged that the FBI agents pressured "John" into cooperating with a promise of U.S. citizenship and "brought heavy-handed pressure upon him with the view of using his relationship to organize a provocation."

The informant has been identified in published accounts as a Guyanese resident alien.

Mr. Zakharov said he thought the FBI agents who arrested him were "terrorists because so many Russian citizens are subject to threats here."

Justice Department sources close to the case say the department has a "very strong" case against Mr. Zakharov and therefore has opposed any deals involving Mr. Daniloff.

Court papers in the case charge that Mr. Zakharov directed the FBI informant to "surreptitiously" photocopy documents kept in a locked safe at the informant's employer, a Queens defense contractor.

According to the papers, FBI agents who searched Mr. Zakharov's New York City apartment found numerous items of suspected espionage equipment.

The items included "materials used by espionage agents to communicate among each other and with a foreign government, coded pads, secret writing paper, greeting cards and other documents containing microdots . . . recording and electronic transmittal equipment, chemicals used to develop coded or secret messages," court papers said.

Also found were "books, records, documents and papers that reflect the identities of foreign espionage agents; financial transactions including payments made to foreign espionage agents; and telephone records reflecting contact among foreign espionage agents," according to court documents.